

things to do than wait for somebody who is finishing a phone call or some appointment. The only way to do this is to cut off the vote, have people miss votes. If I am late, cut off the vote. Senators come in here "hang tooth," sad that they missed a vote, after we keep the vote going for 35 or 40 minutes. I served in the House of Representatives. We had 15 minutes to vote in the House. It is over with. There are 435 Members over there. They all manage to get over and vote on time. I know we have a rollcall, but it is simply unfair to this institution to waste hours every week. My Democratic Senators, if they are late and there is equal pain around here and you cut off your Republicans, I will cut off my Democrats, and I will handle them. I want everyone within the sound of my voice, all the staffs, to hear that it is my understanding, based upon the urging of Senator SPECTER, that we are going to cut these votes off. I hope that is the case. It is a pet peeve I have around here. Where else in the world would you be so discourteous as to have people standing around waiting for you to do something that none of us care about? I don't know what they are doing over there. We hear the excuses, the plane has just landed, they are on their way. They have had too many tardy slips. Let's not accept that anymore. I think if we did it once, the second time it would be a lot easier. And the third time it would never happen. I hope the distinguished Republican leader will force our Senators to recognize that they have the obligation of voting on time. It is the main reason we are here. If they miss a vote, they miss a vote.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, you have heard it now from the two leaders and the chairman and the ranking member. Let's plow ahead, again being respectful of the body itself and the use of time, and keep the bill moving forward and America moving forward.

DARFUR

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, the United States will very soon vote on a resolution urging the international community and the Government of Sudan to end genocide in Darfur. Since March of 2003, more than 181,000 people have died in the Darfur region, Darfur and the country west of Sudan—Darfur is in the western part of Sudan and the country west of that, Chad, and the neighboring towns in that region. One hundred eighty-one thousand people have died of violence and disease. They are dying of malnutrition. More than 2 million people have been displaced from their homes, many times without their families, and remain scattered in these refugee camps in the Darfur region and in Chad.

I have had the opportunity to travel to Sudan many times and to the Darfur region, last year to Chad. Along the border, there are a whole number of refugee camps, each with anywhere

from 6,000 to as many as 12,000 people. When you go into these refugee camps and you sit down on a little mat with all these little makeshift tents with 8,000 people who have had to leave their homes, you hear the stories of murder, the stories of rape from young women. You hear those stories of violence, many with descriptions of the Government of Sudan's jeeps driving through these villages as they are pushed forward. I have heard the stories myself. I have talked to enough people on the ground to know that this is, indeed, genocide and that it is time for us, the international community, to do something about it.

I have said basically that same thing on the floor of the Senate for the last year; many of us have. It is embarrassing to have to come back to the floor to say it once again.

The Government of Sudan has failed to take credible steps in terms of ending this genocide. There has been a lot of talk, but we don't see any action. It was clear, as I was there, as it is now, that the death toll is going to increase. It is going to increase unless we have stronger action, unified action, but not just by the Government of Sudan, because they are not going to act, but the entire international community against Khartoum, where the Government of Sudan is centered. President Bush and former Secretary of State Colin Powell and the Senate have all declared that the Darfur crisis is, in fact, genocide. It was the Senate that officially condemned it as genocide. Once again, we see no real response by the international community.

This past Friday, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees warned that the situation in the Darfur region of the Sudan is getting worse. Where is the international community's response?

Innocent civilians continue to be targeted by the Sudanese Government in Khartoum and its allied Janjaweed militias. The Janjaweed have even caused the United Nations to temporarily suspend some of its relief activities in many areas of Darfur. In the words of the High Commissioner, the situation is "extremely nasty, with ugly events." Last month, 400 Janjaweed Arab militia on camels and horseback attacked a refugee camp killing 35 people, wounding 10 others. More than 80 homes were burned to the ground. On October 8, an African Union convoy was ambushed in the southern part of Darfur. Four Nigerian soldiers and two civilian contractors were killed. The very next day, a group of rebels abducted 38 African Union soldiers in the border town of Tine, threatening the African Union to stay out of the territory.

Today there are fresh reports of heavy gunfire over the weekend in half a dozen towns in the region. The African Union forces deployed to the Darfur region have done a professional job and deserve praise for their determination. But they are up against

ruthless opponents who attack and maim and kill their opponents. Nearly 200,000 civilians are dead, 2 million more displaced and suffering. The violence must stop. Those who are responsible for genocide for these war crimes against humanity and these criminal acts must be brought to justice.

I urge the United States to renew efforts to implement additional sanctions on the Government of Sudan through the United Nations Security Council. I also support an expansion of the size and mandate of the African Union mission in Darfur, and I encourage my colleagues to continue to support its efforts.

Time is running out. We cannot wait and see. The international community must live up to its declared responsibility to protect innocent citizens targeted for genocide. The credibility of the international community is at stake. Even more important than that are the hundreds of thousands of innocent people whose lives now hang in the balance.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The distinguished Democratic leader is recognized.

AMERICA'S PRIORITIES

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I think most Americans have been to Florida. It is such a pleasant place, and beautiful, with wonderful beaches and tremendous weather. But nature has been very unkind to Florida in the past few years. There have been numerous storms, devastating storms. Florida is now being buffeted by Wilma. Winds are over 125 miles an hour with torrential rains, flooding many parts of Florida. Over 20,000 people have sought safety in shelters. Many have chosen to ride out the storm, and that is unfortunate. According to reports, less than 10 percent of the residents of the Florida Keys have evacuated, and it appears this may turn out to be the most damaging hurricane to hit this region in more than a decade. This afternoon, Wilma's victims are certainly in our thoughts. The storm is still there.

In recent weeks, we have seen how destructive nature can be. The people of Florida know we stand ready to help if, in fact, that is necessary.

Victims of Hurricane Wilma join the growing list of the Americans who need our help. While Wilma is upon us—we had Rita before that—we cannot forget the people who have suffered such devastating losses from the storm that hit the gulf, Hurricane Katrina. But it is obvious that the majority has forgotten about them.

We have had bills agreed upon by the Finance Committee and others—bipartisan bills—that we cannot move to the Senate floor. We cannot move them. Now I am told a bill that started out at